

VZCZCXYZ0000  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUCNDT #0762/01 1011518  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 111518Z APR 06  
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
TO RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8685  
INFO RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE 0673  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE 0284

UNCLAS USUN NEW YORK 000762

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#)  
SUBJECT: UNSC: MARCH MIDDLE EAST BRIEFING

¶1. (U) In his March 30 briefing to the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Tuliameni Kalomoh discussed the new Palestinian government, the just-completed Israeli elections, security issues, the humanitarian situation in Gaza and developments in Lebanon. Kalomoh said that while the new Palestinian government shows signs of evolving from Hamas' deeply disturbing record and covenant, it must reassess its position on the Quartet's principles and President Abbas' platform of peace if it is to enjoy strong international support. Kalomoh noted the so-called "convergence plan" outlined by Acting Prime Minister Ohlmert during the election campaign, which calls for withdrawal from parts of the West Bank and the annexation of major settlements blocks, with the stated goal of setting Israel's permanent borders by 2010. Noting that Israeli statements that it would proceed unilaterally with such a plan should it judge that negotiations with the Palestinian side were not possible, Kalomoh warned that unilateral Israeli actions could well diminish the prospect of a viable Palestinian State in the framework of a two-state solution should such action cause Palestinians to believe there is nothing to be gained by moving toward compromise.

¶2. (U) On security issues, Kalomoh noted that since the March 14 events at Jericho prison, calm has been restored, although President Abbas has demanded the immediate return of many of the prisoners and Israel has indicated that it intended to hold and try them for their alleged crimes. On the humanitarian situation in Gaza, Kalomoh described the effects of the Karni crossing closing, specifically the depletion of stocks of basic foods and its negative effect on Palestinian exports, and confirmed the presence of Avian Flu in the region. On developments in Lebanon, Kalomoh described the national dialogue begun on March 2 as an historic and positive achievement, through which Lebanese have addressed major issues and reached consensus on the international investigation into the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri; a court of international nature to try the assassins; rebuilding Lebanese-Syrian relations on a basis of non-interference and mutual respect with a view to establishing full diplomatic relations.

#### Security Council Views

¶3. (U) By a previous agreement, the March Middle East briefing was held as a public meeting, a format that provided an opportunity for interested parties to address the Council to express their views on the situation in the Middle East. In addition to the usual Security Council member's comments, A/SYG Kalomoh's briefing was followed by statements from representatives of Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, the Arab League, the EU, the OIC, the NAM and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian

People.

¶4. (U) For the most part, Security Council reactions and those of interested parties were moderate in tone. Security Council members focused their comments on the new Palestinian government's commitment to the Quartet principles of January 30, 2006, the dangers of Israeli unilateral action, and humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people. Eleven Security Council representatives (U.S., Peru, Greece, Congo, Russia, Denmark, Slovakia, Japan, France, UK and Argentina) alluded to the Security Council's expectation that the new Palestinian government would disavow terror and violence, recognize the right of Israel to exist and accept previous obligations and agreements between the parties, including the Roadmap. At the same time, several Security Council countries (Peru, Denmark and Argentina) counseled against unilateral Israeli actions. Most members of the Security Council expressed concern for the well being of the Palestinian people and hope that uninterrupted assistance would continue to be provided by the international community, though exactly how that is to be done was not clearly addressed. Ambassador Bolton, per Department guidance, made the points that Hamas, as the majority party in the new Palestinian Legislative Council, will have to bear the responsibility for the decisions it makes, that we will continue to judge Hamas by its actions, not its words; and that with the new PA government taking power, U.S. Security Coordinator General Dayton will have no contact with Palestinian security forces who report to any members of a Hamas-led cabinet.

Interested Parties Speak  
-----

¶5. (U) The statements delivered by the interested parties were predictable. The Austrian Permrep's statement on behalf of the EU reaffirmed its support for the Quartet principles, supported President Abbas' determination to pursue a peaceful settlement of the conflict with Israel, and urged Israel to end land confiscations, the construction of the separation barrier and to reverse its settlement policy. The Arab League, Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and NAM statements were clearly supportive of the Palestinian position, urging Israeli compliance with UNSCR resolutions, urging international assistance to Palestinians and calling for a peaceful, negotiated settlement to the conflict.

¶6. (U) Israeli DPR Daniel Carmon delivered a statement that was restrained in its reservations about the Hamas assumption of the Palestinian Authority political helm, reaffirmed Israel's commitment to the Roadmap, and expressed a yearning for a Palestinian partner. Palestinian Permanent Observer Riyad Mansour, focusing on the needs of the Palestinian people, said that the Palestinian people must not be punished for exercising their democratic rights. He noted that President Abbas has reaffirmed the commitment of the Palestinian side to all obligations and agreements signed by

the PLO and the Palestinian Authority (PA) since the elections, including the Roadmap. He also asserted that the PLO, led by President Abbas, is the sole representative of the Palestinian people everywhere and therefore the only real negotiating partner of Israel. In her remarks, Lebanese Charge Caroline Ziade spoke in support of Palestinian assistance and against attempts to impose collective punishment on the Palestinian people for having exercised their democratic choice. In discussing the achievements of Lebanon's national dialogue to date, she said somewhat unexpectedly that agreement had been reached on the need to recover Sheba'a Farms and other territories occupied by Israel.  
BOLTON